

MAZIE K. HIRONO  
HAWAII

**United States Senate**  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1104

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES  
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY &  
NATURAL RESOURCES  
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY  
COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS &  
ENTREPRENEURSHIP  
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

February 1, 2022

The Honorable Thomas J. Vilsack  
Secretary of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

I am writing to request the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) assess opportunities to offer the Pasture, Rangeland, Forage (PRF) insurance plan to livestock producers in Hawaii. Currently, USDA only offers the plan to livestock producers in the contiguous 48 states, excluding Hawaii and Alaska. Hawaii livestock producers believe that the PRF plan could offer another critical tool to help them manage risk of future pasture loss resulting from reduced precipitation.

The PRF product offered by USDA is based on a rainfall index, meaning coverage is contingent on precipitation in a specific area over a certain period. The plan relies on precipitation data provided by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). During initial staff-level conversations with USDA, it has been revealed that the current obstacle to expanding the PRF product to Hawaii has been a lack of precipitation data. As such, I urge USDA to engage in talks with NOAA to explore precipitation data sets that could potentially serve as the basis for the PRF product to be provided to Hawaii livestock producers.

Livestock producers in Hawaii are facing a multitude of challenges, including invasive pests like the two-lined spittlebug, changing rainfall patterns resulting in increased drought, and wildfires. Therefore, it is essential that our producers have a diverse set of tools to ensure that they can continue their livelihoods in the face of these challenges. I am hopeful that through discussions, USDA and NOAA can find a solution to providing a PRF plan to our producers.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Mazie K. Hirono  
United States Senator

CC: Marcia Bunker, Administrator, Risk Management Agency, U.S. Department of  
Agriculture  
Dr. Richard Spinrad, Administrator, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration,  
U.S. Department of Commerce